

IPM Success

STORIES



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Regional
IPM
Centers

Regional IPM Centers: Connecting People, Programs, and Resources

Regional IPM Centers encourage the development and adoption of integrated pest management (IPM), drawing expertise from many disciplines to support effective, economical pest management practices that reduce risks to the environment and human health. Established in 2000 by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), the Regional IPM Centers play a key role in implementing the National Road Map for IPM, which identifies strategic directions for IPM research, implementation, and measurement for all pests, in all settings, throughout the nation.

Integrated pest management offers tools for combating plant diseases, weeds, nematodes, and insect and wildlife pests that can harm food supplies and infest areas where we live, work, and play. The IPM toolbox is packed with high-tech pest forecasting models, sensible pest scouting practices, innovative biological controls, least-toxic chemical options, and much more.

IPM is successful when these tools target the most important pest problems, draw on our best scientific knowledge, are widely available to people who contend with pests, and are put to use in the real world. *The Regional IPM Centers make these things happen.*

IPM Centers serve as a hub where groups such as farmers, regulators, scientists, consumers, government agencies, pest control companies, and environmental organizations can share information and work together toward common goals. The Centers also complement and strengthen state IPM programs by promoting communication among programs and encouraging states to collaborate and build on each others' successes. The IPM Centers:

- organize responses to regional and national pest problems
- create information networks that promote good pest management decisions
- manage funds to ensure the greatest possible benefit from public support of IPM
- communicate successes so that the benefits of IPM are fully understood and valued.

By fostering connections among groups and agencies that care about safe, affordable pest management, the nation's four IPM Centers help to solve real problems and fulfill the promise of IPM.

Northeastern IPM Center: Reducing Health Risks for Urban Residents

Residents in urban settings are prone to pest problems and related housing conditions that threaten human health. IPM programs provide solutions by leveraging resources to train and educate residents in low-income urban settings. These new training programs respond to growing concerns about asthma, which afflicts more than 22 million Americans and can be triggered by cockroaches, mice, and the pesticides used to treat them.

The Northeastern IPM Center has funded specific IPM outreach projects focused on delivering information to urban residents. For example, 50 low-income urban households in Philadelphia, PA, and Camden, NJ, are receiving intensive training, with in-home visits, interviews, educational materials, IPM tool kits, and follow-up surveys. Residents have been enthusiastic, and project leaders are gaining insights about how to reshape pest control attitudes and practices.

The Regional IPM Centers are also part of a national effort to teach IPM in public housing. This project, led by the Northeastern IPM Center, involves collaboration among CSREES, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), land grant universities, and private consultants.

Maintenance staff and residents will learn how to practice IPM and maintain healthy homes. Training tools will include a train-the-trainer curriculum for regional experts, a training for maintenance supervisors and staff, and an educational package for residents. This curriculum will be delivered at sites nationwide. A built-in evaluation phase will allow project leaders to measure the resulting increase in IPM adoption and adapt the training materials for widespread use.

Through projects like these, the Regional IPM Centers successfully harness resources and expertise to increase IPM adoption and reduce the human health risks associated with pests and pest management.

Rhonda Griffin (Pennsylvania IPM Program) trains Diane Gass, the tenant council president of a Philadelphia multifamily, low-income housing unit, on IPM practices for her household.

Photo by Dion Lerman, Pennsylvania IPM Program



North Central IPM Center: Staying in Touch with IPM Needs

Regional IPM Centers stay in touch with IPM needs “on the ground” by connecting with growers and other pest managers in various crops and settings, gleaning information that can be used to set and address regional IPM priorities. In the Great Lakes region, a lack of funding kept vegetable specialists from meeting for several years, but in 2005 the North Central IPM Center revitalized the Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group with funding that brought together stakeholders from nine states and Ontario, Canada. This working group has been going strong ever since, supported with \$30,000 annually in Center funds.

The group has two project committees to interact with growers: one to conduct surveys assessing IPM adoption in vegetable crops and the other to develop an educational workshop on Cucurbit IPM for the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, and Marketing Expo. The survey subcommittee completed a pumpkin survey in 2007. The survey included respondents from six states and Ontario providing information about pre-plant, at-plant, in-season, harvest, and post-harvest IPM considerations, plus record-keeping, training needs and demographic information. Results showed that 83.5% of growers were classified as moderate to high IPM adopters, and rely on Extension specialists for training on specific IPM practices.

The Cucurbit IPM modules featured eight presentations on Soils and Fertility, Disease, Weed, and Insect Management, delivered by regional university specialists. Workshop participants received a DVD containing all presentations, which are also available online.

To assist growers throughout the growing season, the Vegetable Working Group maintains a listserv to help diagnose problems seen in the field. Additional information about the group can be found on their website, <http://glvwg.ag.ohio-state.edu/>.



Western IPM Center: IPM Implementation in the Nation's Schools

Pest management practices in our nation's schools often lead to unmanaged pest infestations, unsafe and illegal use of pesticides, and unnecessary pesticide exposure. In response to these risks and the need to protect schoolchildren from pesticide exposure, the Western IPM Center led a large collaborative effort involving the Regional IPM Centers, U.S. EPA, the IPM Institute, land grant universities, school district personnel, and private companies. This collaboration has produced the first national Pest Management Strategic Plan (PMSP) for IPM in Schools (in its final stages of development).



Pest Management Strategic Plans assess the status of pest management in agricultural commodities, residential and public areas, recreational environments, and other settings, providing a compilation of current best practices and listing priorities for research, education, and regulation. The School IPM PMSP fulfills these objectives and sets out a plan to achieve full implementation of IPM in all of the nation's schools by 2015.

The broad partnership behind this PMSP also catalyzed formation of a federally-funded, U.S. EPA-coordinated National IPM in Schools work group, two regional IPM in Schools work groups (Western and Southern), and plans for similar work groups in the North Central and Northeast regions. Additional impacts of the PMSP include increased inter-agency collaboration and creation of a model that can be extended to pest management in similar environments including housing, childcare facilities, college campuses, libraries, and other public buildings. This PMSP contributes to increasing the impact of IPM in public and residential areas where people live, work, and play -- one of the focus areas in the National Roadmap for IPM.

Southern IPM Center: Protecting Crops and Lowering Costs

A national warning system designed to help soybean farmers protect their crop from the devastating disease Asian Soybean Rust (SBR) has saved millions of dollars since 2005. A multi-state collaboration among the four regional IPM Centers, government agencies, farm organizations, agricultural businesses and land grant universities, the Integrated Pest Management Pest Information Platform for Extension and Education (*ipmPIPE*) has been a valuable resource to the soybean industry and continues to grow.

The *ipmPIPE* began shortly after SBR was found in the US and has since expanded to include web components for soybean aphid and plant viruses and other fungal diseases of dry beans, chick peas and lentils. The web-based system uses pest and crop data from sentinel plantings located from the Gulf Coast to the Canadian border, and from New Jersey to Oregon. Agricultural experts monitor sentinel plantings and enter their findings into a national database. Analysis of maps generated from that data, along with weather information, can inform farmers and farm advisors about the probability that diseases or pests are likely to affect the crop.

The Southern Region IPM Center administers federal funds for the *ipmPIPE* program. The timely disbursement and careful management of these funds support the sentinel plot network, overwintering plots, mobile scouting, diagnostics, coordination and communication responsible for the effectiveness of the *ipmPIPE*.

According to the USDA's Economic Research Service, savings attributable to the use of *ipmPIPE* during the 2005 season alone were as high as \$299 million. A competition in 2008 added two new components: forecasting downy mildew in cucurbits and predicting pecan nut casebearer activity.



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